



**Minutes of the Dean Democratic Club of Silicon Valley Organizational Meeting**  
May 24, 2021

**Next working meetings:** July 26, August 23, September 27, October 25, November 22  
**Annual picnic and meeting to elect officers:** June 19; area 2, Ponderosa Park, 811 Henderson Avenue, Sunnyvale

**Introductions:** John Comiskey called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Following that, each person introduced himself or herself and made a statement about recent political involvement.

**Adoption of agenda:** Ralph Wheeler moved that we adopt the agenda, Gerry Hunt seconded it, and the motion passed with no dissension.

**Approval of minutes:** Alice Smith moved that we approve the April minutes, Amy Wright seconded the motion, and it passed with no dissension.

**Treasurer's report:** Amy Wright reported that the club has \$235 in the state and \$2353 in the federal account for a total of \$2588. Amy has had trouble trying to send the \$200 check that the club voted to give to the Stop the Republican Recall campaign because they seem to take contributions only on ActBlue. Alice Smith volunteered to help find out how to get a check to them.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Nominating committee report:** Committee member Nancy Neff thanked current Dean Club office holders for serving and for offering to serve next year. The following people are going to run again for the offices they currently hold: John Comiskey and Emilie Gatfield, cochairs; Amy Wright, treasurer; Gerry Hunt, corresponding secretary; Mary Gill, recording secretary; Karen Porter and Jackie Wheeler, members at large. They proposed Mimi Spreadbury for program director.

**Restore Democracy Amendment:** John had sent out information about this proposed amendment before the April meeting and again preceding the May meeting. David Burke, an attorney and founder of the nonpartisan organization Citizens Take Action, gave a slide presentation about their proposed amendment. The Restore Democracy Amendment aims to shift power regarding money in politics to Congress, state legislatures, and voters and away from the Supreme Court, which has made numerous decisions striking down limits on political spending (e.g., Buckley v. Valeo in 1976, Citizens United in 2010). The amendment addresses three problems with our current election system: (1) big

money narrows the field of candidates; (2) legislators typically have to spend as much as 20 hours a week fundraising rather than being able to focus their time on legislation; (3) the system favors powerful interests. It will probably take about five years to get 2/3 of Congress to pass the amendment and 3/4 of the states to ratify it. However, the concept is very popular among people of all political parties, and the organization has charted a path forward. Gerry Hunt moved that we endorse the project but accepted a friendly amendment from Alice Smith that we wait until our July meeting (since the June meeting is our election and picnic). Nancy Neff seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. David suggested that we go to the website, where we can sign up, volunteer, and/or donate: <https://citizenstakeaction.org/restore-democracy-amendment/>

**June 19 picnic and election of officers:** John announced that Ben Stetson was recently able to reserve **Area 2** of Ponderosa Park, 811 Henderson Avenue, in Sunnyvale from 11:00 to 3:00. The election will be at noon. Nancy Neff reported that she and Gerry Hunt have been sending out invitations to electeds. Jeff Rosen, county DA, replied that he cannot commit to Saturday meetings for religious reasons but would welcome an invitation at some other time. Nancy asked if anyone could contact Bob Wieckowski, Zoe Lofgren, or Jerry McNerney since they have not been able to get invitations through to them. Tom Shaw will contact Bob Wieckowski, who is his senator. Both Tom Shaw and Jackie Wheeler volunteered to contact Zoe Lofgren. John will contact Jerry McNerney or ask Swanee Edwards to do so. The picnic will continue the potluck tradition, but if some people prefer to bring their own food that is fine. Mary Gill asked if those who have ice chests and water urns could bring them (since not everyone has those items). Nancy volunteered to bring ice, an ice chest, and a water urn. Gerry and John volunteered to bring ice chests, ice, and drinks. Jackie volunteered to bring a water urn.

**All Clubs Picnic:** John reported that there has been no word yet on this event, which is usually held in the summer and features club booths, a barbecue, and speakers. However, since we are not having a business meeting until July, he asked that we approve up to \$200 as our club contribution for the booth and food for our members in case the event is organized in the interim. Gerry Hunt moved that we approve up to \$200 for the All Clubs Picnic, Jackie Wheeler seconded the motion, and it passed with no dissension. Amy will send a check if/when she is notified.

**Nicole Parra campaign for CA-21:** Emilie Gatfield proposed that we adopt Nicole Parra's campaign for the House district 21. She noted that Nicole Parra does have some baggage from past election cycles, but she is also getting endorsements from people like Fiona Ma, Betty Yee, Eleni Kounalakis. She said that TJ Cox may be running in another district. Jackie said the baggage issue raised some red flags for her, and Alice agreed. However, since it is so early Emilie said it would be fine with her to wait until January to consider the proposal. Gerry said that he would like to find out what TJ Cox plans to do before making any commitments; our club strongly supported TJ. The filing deadline is March 11. Ralph pointed out that we don't have the district lines yet and won't have them for a long time. There was general agreement that we should not endorse or adopt a campaign at this point given that there are so many unknowns.

**Valley Blue in '22:** Mary Gill followed up on John's comments about this event in the introductions. Zoe Lofgren, Josh Harder, TJ Cox, Jerry McNerney, Katie Porter, Alex Padilla, Betty Yee, and other Democratic stars will be at an event to benefit the Democratic Central Committees of San Joaquin, Kings, Stanislaus, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara counties. Contributions are split evenly unless otherwise designated by the donor. Comedian/actress Leighann Lord will host. May 27, 7:00-8:30. Info and registration: [bit.ly/valleyblue22](http://bit.ly/valleyblue22)

**Growing the Grassroots:** Mary reported on an event with Dolores Huerta of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, Ruth Lopez of Valley Voices, and Reyes Uviedo of Valley Forward, sponsored by Central Valley Matters, a new group started primarily by people who have worked in CA-21, including Tom Shaw, who has drafted an invitation letter to the event. Each speaker will describe their grassroots organizations and the important work they are doing in their communities, all in CA-21. June 10 at 5:00 p.m. Info and registration: [bit.ly/cvmfund](http://bit.ly/cvmfund)

**Anti-recall banner project:** Emilie Gatfield reported on a project to create anti-recall felt banners to hang on overpasses or places in other areas where they will be seen by many people. It will cost under \$50 to buy the materials for a banner. Jackie Smith in Placer County (who ran for Assembly and is organizing the project) will send participants templates for the lettering. Emilie moved that we get involved in the effort, and Barbara Comiskey seconded it. The motion passed with 6 yes votes, 2 no votes, and 5 abstentions.

**Juristac:** Amy Wright described the efforts by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band to preserve the area called Juristac near Gilroy. The owners of the land are trying to get a permit to create a quarry on the area, and the Amah Mutsun are urging Santa Clara County to deny it. The Dean Club has signed on to the petition to protect Juristac as a club, and many of us have signed on as individuals. Amy has talked to the Los Altos City Council about supporting the resolution to deny the permit. They are trying to get other towns, such as Campbell or Cupertino, to do the same before the effort moves on to the Board of Supervisors. Lucas Ramirez asked about the time frame and the answer was that it's difficult to say because the environmental report was held up and the comments period has not been delineated. Lucas said there are people on the Mountain View City Council who might want to help, as would he. Amy has materials about the issue; email her if you are interested in helping.

**SB 300:** Mimi Spreadbury reported on SB 300, a bill by Dave Cortese that would eliminate a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole for people convicted of a murder charge who did not commit the murder themselves. This would apply in cases where there was some special circumstance (e.g., they were accomplices in a robbery that ended up with a murder that they did not commit). This is also a racial justice issue, Mimi said, and is opposed by police unions, etc. She urged people to ask their senators to support the bill.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Good government:** Nancy Neff reported that SB 752, the Disclosure Clarity Act, passed the Senate Appropriations Committee and will be up for a vote in the full Senate soon. This bill will stop some blatant abuses of the California DISCLOSE Act. It will also require online graphic ads to clearly disclose their top funder right on the ads themselves.

**Candidates and initiatives:** John noted that many people are announcing their candidacies for city council races in San Jose and other towns. The assessor's race is also attracting candidates. We might consider having some of these people talk to us even though it is too early to endorse anyone.

**Environment:** Mimi Spreadbury and Amy Wright reported that rooftop solar is under threat from AB 1139 (Lorena Gonzalez). The bill would disincentivize homeowners from installing solar panels and selling energy back (which would reduce utility company profits). It will involve both a monthly fee (average \$70) for home solar as well as an 80% reduction in the credit given to solar users for surplus energy sent back to the grid. We should encourage, not discourage, clean energy. They urged people to ask their Assembly members to vote no on the bill.

**Social justice:** Covered earlier.

**Political outreach:** John noted that the Valley Blue in '22 event will help with voter registration in the valley.

**Economic justice:** No report

**Health care:** Gerry Hunt reported that AB 1400 (Guaranteed Health Care for All) is in the Assembly health-care committee where Jim Wood, the committee chair, is not going to allow it to be heard. Emilie added that he has problems with some of the specifics in the bills.

**Education:** No report

**Club membership:** There was a surge in membership last month; some people reported that they renewed after getting notifications from Ben Shapero that their membership had expired.

## **Announcements**

❖ Jackie Wheeler reported that there is a recording of an excellent program last Saturday "What does an anti-racist community look like?" If you want a link to the recording, contact Jackie: jackie.wheeler217@gmail.com

❖ Alice Smith [bit.ly/valleyblue22](https://bit.ly/valleyblue22) reported that there is a recording of the event about voter suppression on May 12 (featuring Ann Ravel, Joe Simitian, Andrea Miller, and others); it is on the National

Voter Corps website: [www.nationalvoter corps.org](http://www.nationalvoter corps.org)

**Adjournment:** At 8:54 Ralph Wheeler moved that we adjourn, Amy Wright seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Mary Gill